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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/24/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: MUSA QALA: PRESSING FOR TEST TWO

REF: A. KABUL 142

[1](#)B. KABUL 236

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Neumann for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Deputy MOI Minister Khalid updated the PAG January 20 on Musa Qala developments since the last meeting (ref A). He reported that the GOA had sent a Commission to Musa Qala and Lashkar Gah to meet with the elders and the Chief of Police. The Commission confirmed that 40 ANAP were operating in the district and that eight schools had opened. MOI reported that Musa Qala elders indicated they would welcome ANSF and ISAF forces but that Governor Wafa suggested it was better to first lay the groundwork with the locals since the "so-called Taliban" might react negatively if a force went in precipitously.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador Neumann sought clarification on the status of Test 2. National Security Advisor Rassoul responded that Test 2 should happen now and that Test 3 would take place after discussions between the Governor and President Karzai. Rassoul noted that the Governor had not yet given President Karzai his views on the situation. COMISAF Richards urged the GOA to decide on a date for Test 2. He said that, since the elders had given their agreement, he would start agitating for a target date. The Ambassador said he was uncomfortable having the PAG totally surrender its decision to Governor Wafa and urged an early decision on a target date, otherwise the fundamental principle of the tests would be lost.

[1](#)3. (C) NDS and UNAMA shared different interpretations of their meeting with the elders. NDS Chief Saleh described the elders as "not very welcoming but rather harsh and critical" toward the GOA's slow delivery of reconstruction and development in the district. The elders suggested the GOA fix corruption elsewhere in the country first before going to Musa Qala. Saleh said his take on the meeting was that the elders were not entirely positive and very cautious toward testing. "It was not a smooth meeting", he remarked.

¶4. (C) UNAMA Deputy SRSG Alexander interpreted the criticism from the elders as directed at the previous Governor, not at Wafa. He thought the new Governor was being received rather well. He noted that Governor Wafa had instituted tests of his own in the form of protocols (ref B) to key districts in the area, which has raised the standard of loyalty. The Governor wanted time to consult more widely, Alexander advised.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador expressed support for the Governor's new tests and protocols and said the U.S. was willing to give Governor Wafa more time. He referenced reports of non-governmental administrative functions being carried out in Musa Qala by Taliban and noted that there was contradictory information about who was in the no-go area. He stressed that this was not a sustainable situation and urged the PAG not to delay a decision much longer.
NEUMANN